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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 635**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 05 MARCH 2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 6 - 2021**

**635. Ms L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Whether her department has provided any support to early childhood development (ECD) centres that could not generate any revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic; if not, why not; if so, what total number of ECD centres did her department provide support to? NW751E

**REPLY:**

The Department of Social Development has provided support to early childhood development (ECD) centres, which include ECD centres that could not generate any revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 and 2021 in the following ways to mitigate the impact of the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 (including lockdowns) due to the national state of disaster:

* The provincial Departments of Social Development, by direction of the Minister of Social Development continued with the payment of subsidy to *626 574 children accessing registered funded ECD programmes* through equitable share and conditional grant, irrespective whether they were open or not.
* The conditional grant for ECD’s infra-structure component (as this could not proceed under the lockdown restrictions) was repurposed to provide essential protective personal equipment (PPEs) to assist ECD centres to comply with COVID 19 health and safety requirements. A total of 13 780 *ECD centres* were supported.
* The Department of Social Development also applied for the Presidential Employment Stimulus as a measure to support the ECD sector, an amount of R496 million was received from the National Treasury in this regard. The allocation seeks to minimise the loss of income, support continued operation and reduce the risk of permanent closure. This is implemented through *ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund* (ECD-ESRF) with a focus on providing additional financial support towards the ECD workforce as part of a once-off temporary intervention, through ECD programmes. The ECD-ESRF will provide *108,833 ECD related* workers with income support through about 28,283 existing *ECD programmes* (registered and unregistered centres and programmes) that applied to this Fund. The process for the payment of those who applied and verified is currently underway.